

that SSA will process fee payments to attorneys in a timely fashion.

The legislation we are introducing today simply seeks to put that reasonable expectation into law. H.R. xxxx would prohibit the Social Security Administration from charging an attorney the 6.3 percent assessment unless the agency certifies his or her fee for payment within 30 days of the award of past-due benefits to his or her client. Without this common-sense legislation, SSA would be permitted to charge the 6.3 percent assessment without regard to how long the agency takes to process attorneys' fee payments.

As necessary as this legislation may be, it is not all that is required of this and future Congresses. We in Congress must also remain vigilant and ensure that the new administrative assessment imposed by the Work Incentives Improvement Act does not deter attorneys from representing disability claimants. Given the complexities of the disability determination process, if claimants are unable to secure professional legal representation, the results could be disastrous.

Claimants without professional legal representation appear to be far less likely to receive the benefits to which they are entitled. For example, in 1998, 57.6 percent of claimants represented by an attorney, but only 35.7 percent of those without one, were awarded benefits at the hearing level.

As mandated by the Work Incentives Improvement Act, the General Accounting Office will examine the impact of this new administrative assessment upon claimants' access to legal representation. If the GAO finds that the assessment does impair claimants' access, I fully expect that, consistent with the conference agreement on the Work Incentives Improvement Act, Congress will revisit this issue once more.

In closing, I look forward to working with Chairman SHAW on this piece of legislation in the same bipartisan manner that characterized our successful efforts last fall on the Work Incentives Improvement Act and again this spring on the repeal of the Social Security retirement earnings test. With this sort of collaboration, I am certain that we can pass this bill as well, thereby creating incentives for SSA to improve its procedures for making payments to attorneys and ensuring that disability claimants have qualified and reliable attorneys to whom they can turn for assistance.

MAKE-A-WISH FOUNDATION 20TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. ELIJAH E. CUMMINGS

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 9, 2000

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, it is my honor to recognize and join in the celebration of the Make-A-Wish Foundation's 20th Anniversary. In its twentieth year, the Make-A-Wish Foundation is a non-profit organization that fulfills the wishes of children fighting life-threatening illnesses. This organization provides once in a lifetime experiences to children, under the age of 18, who may not have the rest of their lives to seek opportunity. Born out of a wish made by a seven-year-old fighting Leukemia in Arizona, the Make-A-Wish Foundation has grown to 80 chapters in the United

States and 20 international affiliates on five continents and is the largest wish granting foundation in the world. In its twenty years of existence, the Make-A-Wish Foundation has granted wishes to over 66,000 children worldwide. The Make-A-Wish Foundation of the Mid-Atlantic, Inc., in particular, helps to serve children in my district as well as other children throughout the entire state of Maryland.

The Make-A-Wish Foundation has granted wishes to children as simple as trips to Disney World and other amusement parks to meeting their favorite entertainer or role model. One young man from my district had his wish fulfilled when he met South African leader and political figure Nelson Mandela. He remarked that there was no better way to learn about blacks and whites living together in peace than to learn firsthand about the life of someone so oppressed yet as unbroken as Mr. Mandela.

The Make-A-Wish Foundation gives children that are fighting life-threatening illnesses a positive break from a world of doctors, hospitals and medicine. I salute the Make-A-Wish Foundation's volunteers and supporters who work to make wishes come true not only in Baltimore City and Baltimore County, but literally all over the world. Congratulations on 20 years of making wishes come true.

HONORING ANITA HINOJOSA

HON. SOLOMON P. ORTIZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 9, 2000

Mr. ORTIZ. Mr. Speaker, today I pay tribute to a South Texas educator, Anita Hinojosa, who will retire in July after 31 years in vocational and adult education. Anita helped make Corpus Christi a better place by virtue of her lifetime commitment to education.

After working as a home economics teacher after graduating from Texas A&I University at Kingsville, and as a consultant, Anita became the Vocational Education Coordinator while also working as an adjunct Professor of Occupational Education at Corpus Christi State University.

In 1990, she became the Career and Technology Education Director for the Corpus Christi Independent School District, the position she will soon leave to enjoy retirement. During the course of her work here, she has supervised some of the most important programs available at CCISD, those programs that work with those who need special training because of their age or special circumstances.

Anita currently oversees the following programs: Adult Basic Education; Alternative High School Center; Summer Training and Education Program (STEP); Pregnancy, Education, and Parenting; Guidance and Counseling; Instructional Technology; and several at-risk programs.

I ask my colleagues to join me today in commending a special patriot, one who spent a lifetime in pursuit of education and teaching, Anita Hinojosa.

HONORING EDWARD WEISS

HON. ELIOT L. ENGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 9, 2000

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, public service, when performed wisely and well, is the most noble of callings. Today I honor a man who has been in public service and who performed in just those ways. Edward Weiss is retiring from the United States Department of Justice, Immigration and Naturalization Service, after 30 years of service.

In his many capacities with the Department, Ed has received outstanding performance ratings from every United States Attorney General under whom he has served since 1981. He is well known for his ability to prepare and litigate cases. He also coordinated the Criminal Alien Program for the New Jersey District.

Ed received his BA degree from Syracuse University and graduated from Brooklyn Law School. He and his wife Susan have two daughters; Robyn, in a pre-doctorate program in Religion at Hebrew University, and Karen, studying law at George Washington University.

Ed is retiring to follow his other passions, hiking and traveling. He is a dedicated professional of who we can all be proud. I join his many friends in wishing him and his family many happy years in his retirement.

HONORING JUSTIN "JAY" CAUFIELD

HON. HOWARD P. "BUCK" McKEON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 9, 2000

Mr. McKEON. Mr. Speaker, today I pay tribute to a very special man. He is a friend, a community leader, and an exceptional educator. His dedication, competence and responsible attitude exemplify all that is right with America's public school system.

For more than twenty-five years, Justin "Jay" Caufield has served as a Principal in the Saugus Union School District. He has been a very active member in the community and in the school district.

Prior to entering the field of education, Mr. Caufield served four years in the U.S. Army in Special Forces. Mr. Caufield is highly respected by his peers, teaching staff and parents. As a teacher and principal in the Saugus School District, Jay Caufield has touched the lives and made a difference for thousands of students.

For the past 17 years, Mr. Caufield has served as the Principal at Emblem Elementary School. As a result of his fine leadership and commitment to excellence, Emblem has earned both State and National recognition. In 1995, Emblem achieved the status as a California Distinguished School. In 1996, the school received recognition from the California School Board Association by earning the Golden Bell award for its highly regarded TEAMS program. In 1997, Emblem Elementary School received the highest possible recognition by being named a National Blue Ribbon School. Under Mr. Caufield's direction, Emblem has continued to excel and uphold its high academic standards.